

E 202
.4
.A133
Copy 1



LETTER

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY

Sons of the Revolution

OCTOBER, 1896

PART FIRST.

COMPLETE

Official Correspondence

IN THE MATTER OF THE

Proposed Consolidation

OF THE

Sons of the Revolution

AND THE

Sons of the American Revolution.

Egg
4
4/190

C. 1905
California Soc.
Sons of the Rev.

C. C.



In the matter of the Proposed Consolidation of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution and the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution:

NOTE OF EXPLANATION.

The following correspondence, read in connection with the resolution passed by the General Society of the Sons of the Revolution at their meeting held in Savannah on the 20th of April, 1896, will in a great measure explain itself.

It is proper, however, to state that your General President, before sending any reply to the first communication of the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, consulted in New York a number of the General Officers of our society as to the character of such a reply, and they were unanimously of the opinion that the answer herewith submitted and marked No. 1, was entirely within the instructions given to us in Savannah, and contained everything which we were authorized to say.

The replies to the second and third communications were, after consultation, naturally based upon the first, and having once concluded that we could not exceed our instructions, it was impossible for us afterwards to appoint committees who would enter upon the wide field of discussion for the formation of a new Constitution without the express authority or consent of our Society.

JOHN LEE CARROLL,

GENERAL PRESIDENT.

SEPTEMBER, 1896.

The General Secretary of the Sons of the Revolution transmitted to the Secretary General of the Sons of the American Revolution the following preamble and resolutions, proposed by Mr. Francis Ellingwood Abbott, Massachusetts Society, seconded by Mr. Robert Olyphant, New York Society, which were adopted at the meeting of the former Society, held April 20, 1896:

Whereas, The existence of two separate societies, with identical objects and nearly identical names, where one strong society alone ought to exist—to wit: Sons of the Revolution and Sons of the American Revolution—is an anomaly which perplexes the public mind, excites distrust of both societies, provokes injurious comment, alienates the sympathy of very many descendants of Revolutionary ancestors whose aid is needed, and seriously interferes with the patriotic work to which both these societies are sincerely and equally devoted ; and

Whereas, Consolidation of these two societies in a single society, on the basis of a Constitution and Plan of Union which had been previously agreed upon at separate meetings of the General Society of Sons of the Revolution and the National Society of Sons of the American Revolution in the City of New York, February 16, 1893, failed on account of disagreement as to the submission of the *original credentials and applications* of all the members of all their respective State Societies to a fresh examination and revision, in accordance with the provisions of the new Constitution agreed upon, as a necessary preliminary to enrolling members of the new consolidated society; and

Whereas, The necessity of this preliminary examination and revision, if the proposed new society is to be exclusively composed, and known to be exclusively composed, of actual descendants of Revolutionary ancestors, ought to be self evident; therefore,

Resolved, That we, the General Society of Sons of the Revolution, convened in Savannah on the 20th of April 1896, hereby proffer, sincerely and fraternally, a standing invitation to the National Society of Sons of the American Revolution to unite with us in a single General Society, ac-

cording to the terms of union which were harmoniously agreed upon at the separate meetings of the two existing Societies in New York, February 16, 1893, as amended by striking therefrom the third paragraph of Article III, which provided for the admission of collaterals; *provided*, that prior to such actual union, the membership rolls of all the State Societies of both the existing societies, together with all the original credentials and applications on which membership has been granted, shall be submitted for fresh examination and revision to a competent and disinterested committee, so constituted by mutual agreement of the general officers as to command the entire confidence of both the uniting societies; and *provided*, further, that this committee shall be empowered and instructed to erase the name of any member, on the roll of any State Society, by whose credentials and application it would appear that he is not entitled to membership under such requirements of Article III of the Constitution agreed upon at New York, February 16, 1893, as relate to direct lineal descendants; to the end that membership in the Consolidated Society shall be indubitable proof of descent from one or more revolutionary ancestors.

Resolved, That the Secretary of the General Society of Sons of the Revolution be instructed to transmit a copy of these resolutions to the Secretary of the National Society of Sons of the American Revolution, with an expression of our hope that they will be received in the same frank and kindly spirit in which they are sent.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a correct copy of the original.

JAMES MORTIMER MONTGOMERY,
GENERAL SECRETARY.

In reply thereto the General Secretary Sons of the Revolution received from the Secretary General Sons of the American Revolution the following preamble and resolutions, adopted by the last named Society at its meeting held April 30, 1896:

Whereas, the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution note, with sincere gratification, the growing

sentiment in favor of a union with the Society of the Sons of the Revolution, upon terms which shall be well considered and equitable, and which shall tend to promote the honor, dignity, and largest usefulness of the societies and the patriotic and public spirited objects for which both are organized ; and

Whereas, the General Society of the Sons of the Revolution, in triennial meeting assembled in the City of Savannah, Ga., April 20th Instant, did adopt resolutions extending a sincere and fraternal invitation to the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution to unite with them in a single society ; and

Whereas, the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution is heartily, sincerely, and fraternally desirous of a consolidation of the two societies, upon a well-considered basis, and is anxious to submit its rolls of membership to a most rigorous and searching examination by a competent and disinterested tribunal, in order that it may, once for all, in the eyes of all men, supply the indubitable proof of the eligibility of all its members, as lineal descendants of revolutionary ancestors ; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, in annual congress assembled in the city of Richmond, Va., April 30th, 1896. That we do hereby send our most fraternal and cordial greetings to the General Society of the Sons of the Revolution, and declare without reservation our strong, sincere desire for a consolidation of the two societies into a single society upon a well-considered basis of union.

Resolved, That we do hereby instruct the general officers of this society to submit the membership rolls and the original credentials and applications, on which membership has been granted, for a fresh examination to a competent and disinterested committee, so constituted by mutual agreement of the general officers of both societies as to command the entire confidence of both societies, said committee to indicate the person or persons in each society who shall not have indubitable proof of lineal descent from a revolutionary ancestor, in accordance with the plan of consolidation, agreed to by the committees of conference in 1893, but now voluntarily amended by the Society of the Sons of the

Revolution by omitting the paragraph which provides for the admission of collaterals; and the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution does hereby pledge itself to erase from its rolls of membership the names of all persons indicated by said committee as not having indubitable proof of lineal descent.

Resolved, That we hereby empower the general officers of this society to appoint a committee of able, competent, and disinterested men, who shall confer with a like committee of equal size, appointed by the general officers of the Sons of the Revolution, to agree upon a basis for the union of the two societies; to the end that said plan of union, together with the report of the Committee on Revision of the Membership Rolls, may promptly be transmitted by the general officers of both societies to their respective State societies for approval, so that when a majority of the State societies of each organization shall have approved the same, said general officers may cause a special congress of the united societies to be elected upon the basis of the new constitution to form a national organization. And, further, we do hereby pledge the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution heartily and sincerely, to labor for the removal of every possible cause of disagreement between the two societies and to effect a satisfactory union at the earliest possible date.

Resolved, That the President General and the Secretary General of this society are instructed immediately to communicate this preamble and accompanying resolutions to the officers of the General Society of the Sons of the Revolution, with the assurance of our fraternal regard, and our desire that a union of the two societies may speedily be effected.

(Seal.)

HORACE PORTER,
PRESIDENT GENERAL,
FRANKLIN MURPHY,
SECRETARY GENERAL.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a correct copy of the original.

FRANKLIN MURPHY,
SECRETARY GENERAL.

*The following correspondence has also been had :

I.

146 BROADWAY,
NEW YORK, May 25, 1896.

FRANKLIN MURPHY, Esq.,

Secretary General Sons of the American Revolution,
No. 143 Chestnut Street, Newark, N. J.

SIR :

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of May 9th, enclosing certain resolutions which were unanimously adopted by the congress of the Sons of the American Revolution, assembled in Richmond, Va., on the 30th day of April, 1896.

In reply to your communication I have been instructed by the General Officers of the Society of Sons of the Revolution to say, that they appreciate most highly the earnest desire for a fraternal union of the two societies as expressed by the resolutions of the National Society of Sons of the American Revolution, and that the General Officers of the Society of Sons of the Revolution, under the authority of the resolutions adopted by that society at its meeting held April 20th ultimo, (a copy of which is enclosed) are prepared to appoint an able and disinterested committee to examine the credentials of the members of both societies.

I am instructed further to say that when this committee has completed its work as to the revision of the lists, and when the names of those in either society who have been found disqualified for membership have been erased from the rolls, the General Officers of this society will be prepared to unite in a call for a congress of the two societies, so that they may form one great national organization upon the basis of union and by the adoption of the Constitution agreed upon by the representatives of both societies on February 16, 1893, as amended by the General Society of Sons of the Revolution at its triennial meeting in Savannah, on the 20th day of April, 1896.

I have the honour to remain your obedient servant,

JAMES MORTIMER MONTGOMERY,
GENERAL SECRETARY.

II.

NEWARK, May 29, 1896.

JAMES M. MONTGOMERY, Esq.,

General Secretary, Sons of the Revolution,
56 Wall Street, Room 5, New York.

DEAR SIR:

I have already had the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of May 25, 1896, which I took pleasure in submitting to the General Officers of this Society. They instruct me to say in reply that they will be happy to meet the General Officers of your Society at the Waldorf hotel, at 3.30 P. M., on Wednesday, June 3, or any other afternoon of next week which your Officers may find more convenient, for the purpose of selecting by mutual agreement a committee to examine the credentials of the members of both Societies as contemplated in the resolutions adopted by the two bodies; that upon receiving its report they will strike from the rolls the names of those who may be found to be disqualified for membership, and that they will be prepared to form one organization upon a basis of union to be mutually agreed upon by a new conference committee as proposed in the resolutions adopted by the Sons of the American Revolution, at Richmond, Va.

I am instructed further to call attention to the fact that no mention is made in your communication of the provision embodied in the resolutions of this Society for the appointment of "A committee of able, competent and disinterested men, who shall confer with a like committee of equal size, appointed by the General Officers of the Sons of the Revolution to agree upon said basis of union." Our officers would be glad to be informed whether it is the intention of the Officers of your Society to appoint such a committee.

It is thought that the constitution prepared and submitted by the committees of the two Societies on February 16, 1893, and which failed of adoption, may be made more satisfactory by new committees, considering the fact that both Societies have undergone changes, contain many new members unfamiliar with the proceedings of 1893, and have learned much from experience since that time as to the requirements which should be embodied in an instrument so important as

that which is to constitute the organic law of a large and important consolidated society. Strength is given to this belief by the fact that your society has already suggested an important amendment, namely, prohibiting the admission of collaterals, which will be accepted gladly by this society, as such a prohibition has always existed in the constitution of the Sons of the American Revolution, and by the further fact that the proposed constitution of 1893 contained conflicting language and provisions which neither society presumably would now want to have incorporated in the permanent law which is to govern the joint society.

The provision for the appointment of such committees by the two societies was embodied in the resolutions passed by this society, for the reason that it was supposed that it would be more satisfactory to both societies to have a full discussion of the subject and ascertain whether there are not advantageous changes which could be made that would meet with the assent of the two organizations.

I am further instructed to convey to you the assurance that our General Officers are willing and anxious to unite with you in taking all steps, within their power, to promote the much desired object of a permanent union.

Yours truly,

FRANKLIN MURPHY,
SECRETARY GENERAL.

III.

NEW YORK, June 8, 1896.

FRANKLIN MURPHY, Esq.,

Secretary General Sons of the American Revolution,
No. 143 Chestnut street, Newark, N. J.

DEAR SIR :

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 29th of May, 1896, in reply to my letter of the 25th ultimo.

I am instructed by the General Officers of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution to say that there appears to have been a misunderstanding on the part of the Society of

the Sons of the American Revolution as to the meaning of the resolutions which were passed by this society on the 20th of April last at Savannah. I take the liberty of enclosing a copy of those resolutions for closer examination.

You will see by the terms of the first resolution, that a standing invitation is tendered to the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution "to unite with us in a single society *according to the terms of union which were unanimously agreed upon at the separate meetings of the two existing societies in New York, February 16, 1893*, as amended by striking therefrom the third paragraph of Article III, which provided for the admission of collaterals."

The action of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in their reply of the 25th of May, 1896, was limited by the terms and scope of the resolution adopted at Savannah, and they felt that they had no power to exceed the instructions which were given to them at that meeting. They therefore expressed their readiness to appoint a committee of disinterested gentlemen to examine the credentials of the members of both societies, as this was the only committee which they were authorized to name.

I am instructed further to say, that however opinions may differ as to the value of the terms of agreement which were adopted in February, 1893, it must be remembered that those terms were the result of many conferences of the representatives of both societies, and were supposed at the time to cover every point about which in future any dispute could arise.

The meeting of two committees now, as proposed by the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, to consider a "basis of union," would necessarily open up the whole subject, as to name, insignia, qualifications, etc., etc., all of which the Society of the Sons of the Revolution looked upon as concluded by the terms of agreement adopted in 1893.

This society therefore regrets very much that the union of the two societies should now be made by your society to depend upon the adoption of a "new basis," when they had considered those important questions settled in 1893.

In conclusion I would respectfully repeat that the power of the General Officers of this Society is limited by the reso-

lution passed at Savannah, and they have no authority to appoint any committee but that which provides for the examination of the credentials of the members of both societies.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

JAMES MORTIMER MONTGOMERY,
GENERAL SECRETARY.

IV.

NEWARK, N. J., July 28, 1896.

JAMES MORTIMER MONTGOMERY, Esq.,
General Secretary, Sons of the Revolution.

DEAR SIR :

I have the honor now to reply to your favor of June 8th, which I took pleasure in submitting to the General Officers of this society.

They have instructed me to say that there was no misunderstanding on their part as to the wording of the resolutions which were passed by your society at Savannah, but the propositions expressed in our communication to you of May 29th were made in the hope that under the circumstances, and in consideration of the general desire for prompt action in regard to union, your officers would take the responsibility of acceding to the appointment of a committee to meet a committee named by this society to discuss the most important of all questions—a fair basis of union and to see whether such committees could not by mutual agreement unite upon a plan which could at least be submitted to the societies for their action.

The resolutions of your society adopted at Savannah looked to the formation of a single society, upon the terms of union set forth in the proposed constitution of February 16, 1893, with an amendment thereto. It was, therefore, naturally supposed that as your society had made an amendment to that document without consultation with this society, the privilege should be accorded to this society of taking steps looking to the making of other amendments in consultation with your society.

The Savannah resolutions speak of the constitution of 1893 as having been adopted by the societies whereas the proceed-

ings show that that constitution failed to be adopted. Some of the reasons for believing that it is necessary for both societies to have conference committees take up the plan of reorganization anew, are as follows:

The proposed constitution of 1893 was prepared when the societies were small and without large experience in the means of carrying out the purposes of a great national patriotic organization. Of the present members, one-half perhaps, of each society have joined since the proceedings of 1893 and it would seem fair that they should have a right to be heard in a matter of such importance as a constitution for the government of a permanent union of these organizations.

The proposed constitution of 1893 is so defective that it is believed that your officers will agree that a large Society could not possibly work successfully under its provision. For instance, the last paragraph of Article III states that the Board of Managers of each State Society shall have full and exclusive power to determine the qualifications of applicants for membership, with power to expel or reject all applications. Article VIII says that the General Society shall have power to admit State Societies and determine all questions affecting the qualifications of membership which may by proper memorial be presented for consideration. This language is confusing and seems to be contradictory.

Besides, that constitution makes no provision for the filing of a copy of the credentials of members with the Registrar General of the National Society and does not sufficiently define his duties or give him enough power to fix his responsibility in passing upon the validity of credentials. It prescribes the form of a seal which we are informed was long ago adopted by the Washington Continental Guard of New York City, which, having used the seal for many years, would apparently be entitled to continual use of the same without infringement.

It names the last Wednesday in April as the day for the annual meeting when it has been the custom of both societies to meet on some patriotic anniversary, which gives a meaning and a purpose to the occasion.

It also provides that the larger Society shall take the exact

name of the smaller Society, and it is assumed that that would mean coming under the charter of the latter Society, and be a complete and absolute absorption by one Society of the other, instead of a union of the two. The Society of the Sons of the American Revolution has never intimated, and does not now even suggest that its name be adopted by the joint Society, but thinks that possibly some equally good title, not the exact name of either Society, might be acceptable to both; for instance, the Society of the Revolution or the Society of the American Revolution. The adoption of some such name would be following the almost universal custom in naming patriotic Societies, among which may be named the Society of the Cincinnati; the Society of the Colonial Wars; the Society of the Colonial Dames; the Society of Foreign Wars; the Society of the Army of the Potomac, etc., etc. There are many who think there is more dignity attached to these names from the fact that they do not contain the word "Sons," a term which seems to suggest that the organization is composed of juveniles instead of adults, like the Junior Guards, Junior Veterans, Children of the Revolution, etc. It is advisable also to consider the subject of name for the reason that the plan of consolidation should provide for the largest possible usefulness and grandeur of the united Societies. The Sons of the American Revolution already have a Society in the new Republic of Hawaii, where no Society of this class could probably exist under the name simply of "Sons of the Revolution." It is entirely practicable to form branch Societies in other foreign lands, if the title be specific in indicating that it is the *American Revolution*, from which eligibility is derived.

Again, the constitution of 1893 makes no provision for organizing chapters in the different states. The formation of chapters is becoming a prominent feature in the Sons of the American Revolution; it does much for the convenience of the members and is important as a means of enlarging membership. It therefore seems beyond dispute that the proposed constitution of 1893, in its present form, is seriously defective and obsolete. It seems to be of paramount importance that an instrument which is to form the organic law of a large and influential Society should be prepared be-

forehand so that the present Societies will know exactly what provisions are to govern the new organization. It may be said that after the adoption of the constitution it could be amended at pleasure by the joint Society, but your officers will probably agree with ours that it would be most unfortunate to have a feeling pervade the minds of the members of the Societies that after adopting a constitution embodying a basis of union there were to be immediate changes made in it. In union, upon a comprehensive and complete basis, we would hope to adjust all differences and put an end to controversy, whereas a union upon a basis which would call for immediate changes in the Constitution would precipitate discussion and sow the seeds of discord. It would also look as if a majority might want to overrule the will of a minority, would manifest a disposition to continue the idea that there had existed two separate Societies and might jeopardize the success of the contemplated union.

While the committee on credentials is performing its work, there will be ample time for conference committees to discuss a proper and permanent basis of union. If these committees could not agree upon a satisfactory plan, there would be no harm done, except the loss of time to the individuals composing the committee. You will observe that this Society is instructed to take such a course by the resolutions passed at Richmond, and while your General Society may not have authorized your committee to proceed so far, doubtless if such a course has the approval of your General Officers a committee would be willing to discuss the whole question in the hope that an agreement for union might be reached; in which case such an agreement could be submitted to the Congresses of both Societies next Spring, unless special Congresses should be called sooner, and, if accepted, union could then be had almost at once. It is only proper to say that in the opinion of our officers the feeling of our Society is that—earnestly and sincerely desiring union as it does, it nevertheless feels that such a union should be upon a basis that would be deemed fair after considering all that there is to be presented from the points of view and experience of both Societies, and which would in the judgment of our most dispassionate and well informed

members, promote the highest usefulness of the united Societies.

If, however, your Officers decline even to appoint the conference committee proposed we would be glad to be informed whether they will, under the circumstances wish to proceed with the work of scrutinizing the credentials of the members in both Societies. If so, our General Officers instruct me to say that they will be most happy to enter at once upon that branch of the subject in the hope that the eliminating of one point of dispute will bring the two organizations that much nearer to a union so much desired by all.

In the present temper of the membership of both Societies, it is likely that union will go on piece-meal by the uniting of the various state Societies, and it would seem desirable that the National Societies should take the matter up more comprehensively and submit some definite plan to the State Societies, which, if adopted, would be the means of forming a union that would be harmonious, permanent and complete, and calculated to ensure the highest usefulness of the Societies.

Yours very truly,

FRANKLIN MURPHY,
SECRETARY GENERAL.

V.

NEW YORK, August 11th, 1896.

FRANKLIN MURPHY, Esq.,

Secretary General Sons of the American Revolution,
No. 143 Chestnut street, Newark, N. J.

DEAR SIR:

I have submitted your communication of the 28th of July to our General President, and in reply I am instructed to say, that whatever may be the views of the members of the two societies upon the question of framing a new Constitution for a great National United Society, the General Officers of the Sons of the Revolution are bound to consider their power as limited by the resolutions passed at Savannah in April last, and have tendered to the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution a cordial invitation to

unite with them upon terms wholly within their instructions. This invitation, we now consider, has been rejected by your society, and in its place a totally new proposition has been submitted to us, upon which *your* society has been authorized to act, and we are invited to co-operate *without* the authority of our members. It would be impossible for us to take this action, and inasmuch as the examination of the credentials of the members of both societies could only be of value in case of prospective union, we cannot appreciate the importance of the appointment of a committee unless we were assured that further steps would be taken by your society to correspond to the invitation which has been tendered to you.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

JAMES MORTIMER MONTGOMERY,
GENERAL SECRETARY.

VI.

NEWARK, N. J., September 21, 1896.

JAMES MORTIMER MONTGOMERY, Esq.,
General Secretary, Sons of the Revolution.

DEAR SIR :

I received your communication of August 11th, and have submitted it to our General Officers. I am instructed by them to say in reply that they greatly regret that your communication seems to take it for granted that on account of a conflict of instructions under which the General Officers of our respected Societies are acting, there has been reached a condition of affairs in our negotiations which leads your Officers to terminate them without an effort to procure a wider authority from the members of your Society, and without deeming it of sufficient importance to proceed with the examination of the credentials of the members of both Societies with a view to taking the preliminary steps looking to a union of the Societies.

It is true that the Congress of the Sons of the American Revolution gave to its General Officers a more extended authority than the Congress of the Sons of the Revolution

gave to its Officers, but in a matter of so much importance to both organizations, and regarding which there is such an earnest feeling on the part of the members, it was trusted that your Officers would discuss through conference committees, a fair and equitable basis of union, and would meanwhile proceed with the scrutinizing of the credentials of the members of both Societies, a work which will require a considerable time. The results reached by such committees would, of course, have no binding force without the sanction of your Congress, but they would bring the representatives of the two organizations into intimate communication, secure a free interchange of views and lead perhaps to a joint understanding which would assist our respective Congresses in reaching a harmonious action.

We understand, however, that your Society by correspondence and without the holding of a personal conference between your Officers and ours, rejects all our propositions looking to bringing about such action, and instead of co-operating with us with a view to forming a basis of union by mutual agreement, insist upon an absorption of our Society into yours, by taking your name, acting under your charter and conducting the business under a constitution which has been shown in a previous letter, to be seriously defective, obsolete and practically impossible for both. We can only, therefore, express our extreme regret that in spite of the earnest efforts made by this Society both in 1893 and in the present year, the much desired negotiations for union have been brought to a stand-still.

Yours very truly,

FRANKLIN MURPHY,
SECRETARY GENERAL.

COPY OF
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT,
DECEMBER 22, 1892.

To

GENERAL HORACE PORTER,

President General of the Sons of the American Revolution,

and

HON. JOHN LEE CARROLL,

President General of the Sons of the Revolution.

The Committees of the Sons of the American Revolution and Sons of the Revolution, to whom was entrusted by their respective societies the duty of conferring upon the question of union of the two societies, beg leave to present this their joint Report.

First: They desire to express their gratification at the cordiality, harmony and enthusiasm that have marked their deliberations, and the unanimity which has attended their conclusions.

Second: The desirability of effecting a union being concurred in by all, the Committees of Conference addressed themselves at once to the consideration of the questions essential to the accomplishment of the desired result. These were :

1. Name.
2. Colors.
3. Insignia.
4. New Constitution.

Third: The Committees unanimously decided and do now recommend :

1. That the Sons of the American Revolution and Sons of the Revolution do unite in one organization.
2. That the society so constituted be named Sons of the Revolution.

3. That its colors be buff and blue.
4. That its insignia be, in its general features, that of the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution ; that its seal be of the form hereinafter described.
5. That its Constitution be as follows :

The Constitution of the General Society

OF THE

Sons of the Revolution.

ARTICLE I.

The name of the Society shall be the "SONS OF THE REVOLUTION."

ARTICLE II.

The objects of this society are, to perpetuate the memory of the men who, in the military, naval or civil service of the Colonies and of the Continental Congress, by their acts or counsel, achieved the Independence of the country ; to further the proper celebration of the anniversaries of the birthday of Washington, and of prominent events connected with the War of the Revolution ; to collect and secure for preservation the rolls, records and other documents relating to that period ; to mark by appropriate monuments historic places ; to impress upon the present and future generations the patriotic spirit which actuated our ancestors and established the Republic of the United States, and to promote the feeling of friendship among its members.

ARTICLE III.

Any man is eligible for membership who is of the age of twenty-one years and who is lineally descended from an ancestor who, with unfailing loyalty, rendered material aid

to the cause of American Independence as a military officer, minute-man, soldier, sailor or marine, or a civil officer in the service of any of the several colonies or states, or of the United Colonies or States, whose services as such official shall appear by public official record made at the time, and provided such man be found worthy.

Provided further, that when the claim of eligibility is based on the service of an ancestor as a civil official, such service must have been performed in the civil service of the United States, or of one of the thirteen original States, and must have been sufficiently important in character to have rendered the official specially liable to arrest and imprisonment, the same as a combatant, if captured by the enemy, as well as liable to conviction of treason against the Government of Great Britain.

And provided further, that when there shall be no surviving issue in direct lineal succession from an officer, minute-man, soldier, sailor, or marine, who died or was killed in actual service, or from an officer who received by formal resolve the approbation of the Continental Congress for Revolutionary services, or from a signer of the Declaration of Independence, the claim of eligibility shall descend and be limited to one representative at a time in the nearest collateral line of descent from such ancestor, to be designated by the State Society; and no other descendants in collateral lines shall be admitted in right of any services whatever.

The Board of Managers of each State Society shall have full and exclusive power to determine the qualifications as to worthiness and eligibility of applicants for membership under this Article, with power to accept or reject all applications.

ARTICLE IV.

The General Society shall be divided into State Societies, which shall meet annually on the day appointed therefor in their respective by-laws, and oftener, if found expedient. The Secretary of each State Society shall transmit to the General Secretary a list of its members, together with the names and official designations of those from whom such

members claim membership, with a list of officers elected at each annual meeting.

ARTICLE V.

The State Societies shall regulate all matters respecting their own affairs consistent with the general good of the Society, judge of the qualifications of their members and of those proposed for membership, subject, however, to the provisions of this Constitution, and may expel any member who, by conduct unbecoming a gentleman or man of honor, or by an opposition to the interests of the community in general, or of the society in particular, may render himself unworthy to continue in membership.

ARTICLE VI.

The expenses of the General Society shall be borne by the State Societies by assessment pro rata according to membership.

ARTICLE VII.

The regular meeting of the General Society shall be held every year on the last Wednesday of April in the city of New York, unless otherwise designated, and special meetings may be held upon the order of the General President, or upon the request of two of the State Societies, and such meetings shall consist of the General Officers and a representation from each State Society not exceeding one delegate from each one hundred members of such State Society and every fraction of one hundred over fifty, and, *ex-officio*, the President, Secretary, Registrar and Historian of each State Society, and two delegates-at-large from each State Society.

The expenses attending the annual meetings of the General Society shall be borne by the General Society.

ARTICLE VIII.

At the regular meeting a General President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Registrar and Historian

shall be chosen by a majority of the votes present, to serve until the next regular general meeting or until their successors are duly chosen.

The General Society shall have power at any meeting to admit State Societies thereto, and to entertain and determine all questions affecting the qualification for membership in, or the welfare of, any State Society, which may by proper memorial be presented by such State Society for consideration.

ARTICLE IX.

The insignia of the General Society shall be a cross surmounted by an eagle in gold or silver, and a rosette.

The cross shall be of silver, with four arms, and eight white enamelled points, same size as Chevalier's Cross of the Legion of Honor of France, with a gold medallion in the centre, bearing on the obverse a bust of Washington in profile, and on the reverse the figure of a minute-man surrounded by a ribbon enamelled buff and blue, with the motto, "Libertas et Patria," on the obverse, and the legend, "Sons of the Revolution," on the reverse, both in letters of gold. The cross shall be surmounted by an eagle in gold or silver, and the whole decoration suspended from a ring of gold by a ribbon of dark blue, ribbed and watered, edged with buff, one and one-quarter inches wide and one and one-half inches in displayed length, and may be worn by any member of the Society on ceremonial occasions only, and shall be carried on the left breast, or, if an officer, on the collar, and shall never be worn as an article of jewelry. The custodian of this insignia shall be the General Secretary, who shall issue the same to the members of the society under such proper rules as may be formulated by the General Society, and he shall keep a register of such issues, wherein each insignia issued may be identified by the number thereof.

The rosettes shall be seven-sixteenths of an inch in diameter, of usual pattern, displaying the colors of the Society, and may be worn by all members at discretion in the upper left hand button-hole of the coat.

ARTICLE X.

The seal of the General Society of the Sons of the Revolution shall be one and seven-eighths of an inch in diameter, and shall consist of the figure of a minute-man in Continental uniform standing on a ladder leading to a belfry and holding in his left hand a musket and an olive branch, and grasping in his right hand a bell rope; above, the cracked "Liberty Bell;" issuing therefrom a ribbon, bearing the motto of the Sons of the Revolution, "*Exegi Monumentum Aere Perennius;*" across the top of the ladder, on a ribbon, the figures "1775," and at the left of the minute-man, and also on a ribbon, the figures "1783;" the whole encircled by a band three-eighths of an inch wide, thereon at the top thirteen stars of five points each, and at the bottom the legend, "Sons of the Revolution;" the following being a fac-simile thereof:



The custodian of the seal shall be the General Secretary.

ARTICLE XI.

This Constitution may be amended, provided two-thirds of the members of the General Society present at any gen-

eral meeting or special meeting shall approve, and provided further, that notice of such motion to amend, specifying such proposed amendment in full, shall be given in writing to the presiding officer of the General Society and of each State Society at least sixty days before such motion is to be considered.

Fourth: That this proposed union may be made effectual this Committee further recommends :

1. The presentation of its report to the respective National Societies of the Sons of the American Revolution and Sons of the Revolution at meetings to be called for that purpose on Thursday, the 16th day of February, 1893, in the City of New York, and the adoption at such meetings of a resolution recommending the union of the two societies and the adoption of the proposed Constitution.

2. At a joint meeting immediately thereafter, of the two General Societies, the adoption of the new Constitution and election of officers, to serve until the last Wednesday of April, 1894, or until their successors are elected.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

New York, December 22, 1892.

FRED'K S. TALLMADGE,

President of the Sons of the Revolution of the
State of New York.

JONATHAN TRUMBULL,

President of the Connecticut Society Sons of the
American Revolution.

CHAS. H. WOODRUFF,

Delegate New York Sons of the Revolution.

HORACE PORTER,

President General Society Sons of the America
Revolution and Chairman General
Conference Committee.

JOHN LEE CARROLL,

General President Society of Sons of the Revo-
lution.

BRADLEY T. JOHNSON,

President Maryland Society Sons of the American
Revolution.

EDWIN SHEPARD BARRETT,

President Massachusetts Society Sons of the
American Revolution.

JOHN WHITEHEAD,

President New Jersey Sons of the American
Revolution.

O. H. ERNST,

Delegate from District of Columbia Sons of the
Revolution.

WM. RIDGLEY GRIFFITH,

Delegate from Maryland Society Sons of the
American Revolution.

THOMAS W. HALL,

Delegate from Maryland Society Sons of the
Revolution.

SAM. W. PENNYPACKER,

Delegate Sons of the Revolution of Pennsylvania.

RICHARD McCALL CADWALADER,

Vice-President and Delegate Sons of the Revolu-
tion of Pennsylvania.

CHARLES HENRY JONES,

Delegate Sons of the Revolution of Pennsylvania

ROBERT LENOX BELKNAP,

Delegate New York Society Sons of the Revolution.

JAMES MORTIMER MONTGOMERY,

Secretary of Committee of Conference.
General Secretary Sons of the Revolution.
Secretary of Sons of the Revolution State of New
York.

NATHAN WARREN,

Registrar Massachusetts Society Sons of the
American Revolution.

PART SECOND.

Letter

OF THE

Massachusetts Society

TO THE VARIOUS OTHER

State Societies

OF THE

Sons of the Revolution

OCTOBER 26, 1896

Massachusetts Society Sons of the Revolution.

Officers Elected April 20, 1896.

President, CLEMENT KELSEY FAY.
Vice-President, GEORGE SILSbee HALE.
Secretary, HENRY DEXTER WARREN.
Treasurer, ANDREW ROBESON.
Registrar, JAMES ATKINS NOYES.
Historian, FRANCIS ELLINGWOOD ABBOT.
Chaplain, Rev. LEONARD KIP STORRS.

BOARD OF MANAGERS.

FRANK HARRISON BRIGGS, ARTHUR BRIGGS DENNY,
WALTER GILMAN PAGE, FRANK MERRIAM,
WILLIAM CURTIS CAPELLE, EDWARD TOBEY BARKER,
FREDERICK BANKER CARPENTER, HOWARD EATON HAYDEN,
FRANCIS APTHORP FOSTER.

DELEGATES TO GENERAL SOCIETY, '97.

FRANCIS ELLINGWOOD ABBOT, HENRY DEXTER WARREN,
FRANCIS ROLLIN SPALDING, PHILIP READE, U. S. A.,
WINTHROP WETHERBEE.

ALTERNATES.

Hon. WILLIAM EUSTIS RUSSELL (*deceased*),
Hon. WILLIAM FRANKLIN DRAPER,
Rev. EDWARD EVERETT HALE,
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN STEVENS,
JOHN HOFFMAN COLLAMORE (*deceased*).

Letter
OF THE
Massachusetts Society.

BOSTON, October 26, 1896.

TO OUR BROTHER STATE SOCIETIES,
GREETING :

In the foregoing pages will be found the complete official correspondence growing out of the standing invitation which, at Savannah, April 20, 1896, the Sons of the Revolution unanimously extended to the Sons of the American Revolution to unite with them in a single national organization. This correspondence as it stands is the record of a mortifying failure—a failure especially mortifying to you and to us, since the correspondence itself cannot but create a general impression, which we must all regret, that the representatives of the Sons of the Revolution have been diplomatically defeated, and put apparently in the wrong, by the representatives of the Sons of the American Revolution. It reveals, to be sure, a transparently honest purpose in our representatives to obey the instructions of the General Society, and to abide scrupulously by the letter of these instructions; but it also reveals a failure on their part to understand the true character of the Richmond resolutions, and a consequent failure to keep out of a trap which, whether intentionally or unintentionally placed there, actually opened before them. Interpreting the Richmond resolutions as a general acceptance of the Savannah invitation, when in truth they were a simple evasion of it, our representatives allowed themselves to be drawn into a discussion which has ended in their being held responsible themselves for the absolutely inevitable result of this evasion. Not only is the union so earnestly desired by the vast majority in both societies completely defeated for the present, but—what is extremely unjust and injurious to us—the blame for this defeat seems to be thrown at last upon our own shoulders.

By this correspondence, we ourselves are adroitly made to appear responsible for the continuance of that very disunion which we were doing our honest best to heal; for, when we ourselves, in our own invitation, amended the Constitution agreed on by both societies in 1893, yet *without consulting the other society*, with what face can we refuse to recognize the right of that society to discuss further amendments to it *in courteous consultation?* Manifestly, if we stiffly decline even to consider the proposition of the Sons of the American Revolution for further amendments of that Constitution, and make acceptance of it just as it stands our absolute ultimatum (which was certainly not the intention or the spirit of the Savannah invitation), how can we complain, if the cool common sense of the community condemns us at last to bear the whole burden of responsibility for a schism which all the best men in both societies deeply deplore?

That is the forlorn predicament in which you and we now find ourselves left, as the outcome of this unfortunate official correspondence. The situation is so undignified, so discreditable, so unendurable, that we of the Massachusetts Society now invite you, our brethren in the other States, to unite with us in calling a special meeting of the General Society, in order to extricate ourselves from the mortifying position in which the correspondence leaves us.

A thorough understanding of the facts is necessary to a thorough understanding of the correspondence and its results.

In the first place, the Savannah resolutions were nothing but a "standing invitation." This simple fact, kept steadily in mind, would have obviated the confusion on both sides. In strictness of propriety, an invitation cannot be argued or debated; it cannot be made a source of controversy; it cannot be modified by the recipient; it can only be accepted or rejected. When Mr. Smith invites Mr. Brown to dine with him on Thursday, it would not be considered "good form" for Mr. Brown to reply that he will be happy to dine with Mr. Smith on Friday. It is not easy to see why the same rules of courtesy which obtain between individuals should not equally obtain between societies.

Now the Richmond resolutions were not intended or understood at the time to be an acceptance of the Savannah

invitation without change. This fact is evident in the report of the proceedings, as published in the "Spirit of '76" for May. The Richmond resolutions (printed in full in the correspondence above) were introduced by the Hon. Ebenezer J. Hill, representing an "informal and unpremeditated conference," in the parlor of the President-General, on the previous evening. The Hon. Robert B. Roosevelt, however, moved the following as a substitute for Mr. Hill's resolutions:—

"*It is Resolved*, That the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution cordially accepts the proposition for the consolidation of the two societies on the terms indicated, it having been always opposed to the admission of any but lineal descendants of Revolutionary ancestors; and the President is hereby authorized to appoint a committee of five to meet a similar committee of the Sons of the Revolution, with full power to agree upon terms for carrying into effect the foregoing resolution."

This would have been a cordial and unambiguous acceptance of the Savannah invitation. But objections to it were urged by Mr. Hill, the President-General, and Mr. Avery; in consequence of which, "Mr. Roosevelt withdrew his resolution with a few pleasant remarks, and was rewarded with applause. The resolutions [of Mr. Hill] were then unanimously adopted by a standing vote, amid much applause."

The four Richmond resolutions, then, were certainly neither an acceptance nor a rejection of the Savannah invitation, but rather a fundamental change of it. The first was an expression of fraternal sentiments. The second was an acceptance, not of the invitation, but merely of its *two provisos*, relating to the appointment of a Joint-Committee of Revision and the dropping of any member of either society whom they should report to be ineligible. The third, however, was a radical change of the *invitation itself*, the very essence of which was to unite under the Constitution and Plan of Union already agreed to in 1893; whereas this resolution, ignoring the basis proposed, called for another "basis of union," to be agreed on hereafter by a new Joint-Committee of Conference.

Clearly, then, the Richmond resolutions were a seeming acceptance, and yet a real evasion, of the substance of the Savannah invitation. They apparently deceived the Richmond

convention itself, in which the general desire for union was undoubtedly as genuine and strong as it was in our own convention at Savannah. They certainly deceived our own representatives, as proved by the letter of May 25, printed above in the official correspondence. For this letter proposes, *first*, to go on with the appointment of a Joint-Committee of Revision, and, *secondly*, to go on with the calling of a Joint-Congress of the two societies, on the basis of the report of this Joint-Committee of Revision and the Constitution already agreed to in 1893, but now ignored; while it takes no notice of the proposal to appoint a Joint-Committee of Conference for the purpose of arriving at a new and "well-considered basis of union." It thus treats the Richmond resolutions as a general acceptance of the Savannah invitation, whereas they were in fact a mere evasion of it. By thus misunderstanding these resolutions, it unconsciously invited the diplomatic defeat which followed. For there is no possibility of denying successfully the justice of Secretary Murphy's courteous but crushing retort, when he says in his letter of July 28: —

"It was, therefore, naturally supposed that, as your society had made an amendment to that document without consultation with this society, the privilege should be accorded to this society of taking steps looking to the making of other amendments in consultation with your society."

This grave charge of inconsistency on our part cannot be successfully repelled, as the case has been left by this official correspondence. It was a capital error, therefore, even from a merely diplomatic point of view (to say nothing of equity or equal rights), when the letter of May 25 construed the Richmond resolutions as a general acceptance of the Savannah invitation. For it failed altogether to provide any way by which further minor amendments of the Constitution of 1893 might be jointly effected, yet without abandoning that Constitution as, on the whole, a "well-considered basis of union." The mischievous effects of this error in diplomacy at the start appear too plainly in Secretary Murphy's final letter of September 21, by which the blame for the lamentable failure of all these negotiations is so adroitly shifted from the *evasiveness of the Richmond resolutions* to the insinuated unwillingness of our own officers to have any union at all on any terms. The

fact is that, those resolutions being what they are, no other outcome of the negotiations could have been reasonably expected ; for they neither accepted nor rejected our invitation, but evaded it, and, under cover of discussing it, though discussion of an invitation is clearly out of place, pressed upon our officers a proposition for the appointment of a Joint-Committee of Conference which, of course, exceeded their powers. If the framers of the Richmond resolutions had themselves really wanted union, they could have had it with ease by simply accepting Mr. Roosevelt's resolution as a substitute for their own. There would have been no difficulty in securing, by mutual consent, whatever further amendments of the Constitution of 1893 are really needed. But the real reason for the failure to effect consolidation at this time lies in the evasive character of the Richmond resolutions, and the official correspondence ought to have made this fact plain to all the world.

At the very meeting of May 21 which authorized the sending of the unfortunate letter of May 25, our Massachusetts representative, Dr. Abbot, submitted the following resolutions as a proper reply to Secretary Murphy's communication of the Richmond resolutions : —

Whereas, We have received with pleasure the very friendly resolutions of the National Society of Sons of the American Revolution, adopted at Richmond, Va., April 30, 1896, in response to the invitation of the General Society of Sons of the Revolution to unite with us in a single society on the well considered basis of the Plan of Union separately approved and harmoniously agreed upon by both societies at New York, February 16, 1893 ; and

Whereas, We unfeignedly rejoice that the only point of disagreement which prevented consolidation of the two societies at their conference of February 16, 1893, namely, disagreement as to a fresh examination and revision of the membership rolls of both societies alike, has now been very handsomely removed by the frank and cordial consent of the National Society of Sons of the American Revolution to join with us in effecting such fresh examination and revision, as a necessary preliminary step to actual consolidation of the two societies ; and

Whereas, No basis or plan of union could possibly have a better title to the epithet "well considered" than the plan which was separately and deliberately debated at length, and then independently adopted, by each of the two societies at New York, February 16, 1893; and

Whereas, The only possible result of appointing new and unnecessary committees of conference would be to reopen vexed questions now happily closed forever, to revive old controversies or provoke new ones, and to postpone indefinitely, if not to defeat altogether, that harmonious and complete organic union which both societies have so much at heart; and

Whereas, The general officers of the Sons of the Revolution have no authority whatever to reconsider, much less to alter, the terms of an invitation extended by the General Society itself, but must patiently wait until the invitation has been honored with a distinct acceptance or rejection by the party invited: therefore,

Resolved, That we send our most cordial greetings to the National Society of Sons of the American Revolution, and thank them for having magnanimously removed the original and only important cause of disagreement in the past, by voting at Richmond in favor of fresh examination and revision of the membership rolls, as a condition precedent to actual consolidation of the two societies.

Resolved, That the sole remaining obstacle to such consolidation will have been removed, whenever the National Society of Sons of the American Revolution shall signify its willingness to unite with us in a single general society in accordance with the eminently fair and equal terms of our invitation, and to proceed without delay to carry out the well considered Plan of Union already approved by both societies at their conference of February 16, 1893.

Resolved, That the invitation extended at Savannah is a standing invitation, as cordial as it is sincere; and we earnestly hope it will yet be accepted without reservation, to the end that a schism which should never have existed may be healed for all time to come, on terms which are conspicuously honorable and practicable, just, equal and fair to all concerned.

Resolved, That, if the National Society of Sons of the American Revolution desire now to amend or to strike out

any particular provisions of the Constitution and Plan of Union which both societies unanimously agreed to in 1893, we fraternally suggest that they formulate all such desired changes, together with the reasons for them, and transmit to us a certified copy of the same; and we pledge ourselves to secure a full, candid and generous consideration of them at the next General Assembly of the Sons of the Revolution, with a view to arriving at last at a perfect mutual understanding and a satisfactory, firm, and lasting basis of union.

No action whatever was taken upon these resolutions. In our opinion, if our General Officers had made them their answer to the resolutions adopted at Richmond, there could have been no complaint of their unwillingness to have any union at all, no complaint of their inconsistency, no complaint whatever of their arbitrariness or want of a conciliatory spirit. Yet they would have maintained with firmness the impregnable position taken at Savannah, and constrained the Sons of the American Revolution either to accept our invitation explicitly, or else to accept for themselves the responsibility of explicitly rejecting it. For, without wavering or weakening in our contention that the Constitution of 1893 is on the whole a "well considered basis of union," they would yet have offered a practicable method of effecting conjointly whatever further amendments may be inherently reasonable or just. Such an answer would have rendered it ridiculous that we should be charged, as we now find ourselves charged, with secret unwillingness to effect consolidation on fair, equal, and consistent terms. This is the charge now brought against us as a Society, if not in distinct language, at least by necessary and obvious implication; and it seriously affects our dignity, our self-respect, and our honorable standing before the world. Shall we submit to it in silence, or shall we make a determined effort to set ourselves right, not only in our own eyes, but equally in the eyes of all?

We believe that you, as well as we, feel the moral necessity of prompt action in our own behalf, in order to vindicate the now impugned sincerity of our Savannah invitation, and in order to extricate ourselves from the undignified situation in which we have been left by this official correspond-

ence. We ask you, therefore, to join with us in convening a special meeting of the General Society at the earliest practicable date. According to our General Constitution, such a meeting may be held "upon the order of the General President or upon the request of two of the State Societies." The more numerous the States are that join in the request, so much greater will be its weight, influence, and importance. We hope, therefore, that you will all unite with us in requesting the General Officers to summon a special business meeting of the General Society, at some place and time to be fixed by them, but, if possible, not later than January or February, for the purpose of considering and acting upon the following resolutions, which will be, and hereby are, submitted to the General Society by the Massachusetts Society:—

Whereas, We are unable to consider the resolutions adopted by the Sons of the American Revolution at Richmond, April 30, 1896, as either a definite acceptance or a definite rejection of the invitation extended by us to them at Savannah, April 20, 1896; and

Whereas, We have been officially informed that the Sons of the American Revolution object now to certain particulars of the Constitution and Plan of Union which, having been harmoniously agreed to by both societies in 1893, was for that reason, with a slight amendment of our own, made the basis of the Savannah invitation: therefore,

Resolved, That the invitation which we extended at Savannah was, by its own express terms, a "standing invitation," and remains, therefore, in full force today, notwithstanding the disappointing failure of the official correspondence founded upon it — a failure, however, which resulted inevitably and solely from the undecided character of the answer given to the invitation itself.

Resolved, That, undiscouraged by this failure, we now renew our invitation unchanged; but that, in order to meet courteously and fairly the expressed desire of the Sons of the American Revolution for further modifications of its basis, we now fraternally suggest that they formulate with precision all such desired changes, together with the reasons for them, and transmit to us a certified copy of the same; and we pledge

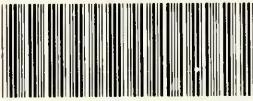
ourselves to secure a full, candid and generous consideration of them at the next General Assembly of the Sons of the Revolution, with a view to arriving at last at a perfect mutual understanding and a satisfactory, solid, and lasting basis of union.

Resolved, That our General Secretary be instructed to send a copy of these resolutions to the General Secretary of the Sons of the American Revolution, with assurance of our sincere desire for a speedy and successful issue of these protracted negotiations.

Believing that the method here proposed for reaching mutual agreement is not only more democratic, but also more likely to prove effective, than the method of secret conference committees, which has hitherto signally failed, we respectfully propose these measures for your thoughtful consideration.

By unanimous order of the Board of Officers and Managers of the Massachusetts Society of Sons of the Revolution, at its regular monthly meeting held at Boston, October 26, 1896.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 712 625 0

